

California's Stem Cell Agency Announces International Collaborations and \$69 Million in New Research Funding

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San Francisco, CA – California's stem cell agency - the California Institute for Regenerative Medicine (CIRM) - announced its first ever collaboratively funded research projects with China and the federal government of Australia, a new project with Germany, plus \$69 million for research to help develop therapies for 15 diseases in its latest round of funding.

These awards mark the third round of funding for the stem cell agency's Early Translational Awards program, which supports projects that are in the initial stages of identifying drugs or cell types that could become disease therapies.

"Our collaborative funding program brings together the best researchers around the world," said Alan Trounson, Ph.D., CIRM President. "These partnerships are critical in engaging the best minds and enabling the elite scientists of the world to work together to drive research towards the clinic for patients. Our 25 collaborative projects with nine funding partners have so far leveraged more than \$65 million in funding for stem cell research projects worldwide. The sun now never sets on the CIRM collaborative projects and scientists are stretching out to one another across the globe to achieve discoveries that will be game changing in medicine."

This is the first time CIRM has collaborated with the Australian federal government; the National Health and Medical Research Council in Australia is committing almost \$1.8 million to the Australian arm of a project on multiple sclerosis with a team at the University of California, Irvine. The Chinese Ministry of Science and Technology has committed roughly \$850,000 in collaboration with a team at UCSF to study liver failure. This is the stem cell agency's first joint effort with scientists in China, which is home to a fast-growing stem cell research community. The other international collaboration is a project with the Federal Ministry of Education and Research in Germany, which is investing around \$1.7 million in a partnership with Stanford University to study heart disease.

"With these new awards, the agency now has 52 projects in 33 diseases at varying stages of working toward clinical trials," said Jonathan Thomas, J.D., Ph.D., CIRM governing board chair. "Californians should take pride in being at the center of this world wide research leading toward new cures. These projects represent the best of California stem cell science and the best international experts who, together, will bring new therapies for patients."

The disease focus of the new awards includes brain tumors, muscle atrophy, Alzheimer's disease, stroke, spinal cord injury, heart disease, multiple sclerosis and incontinence, among others.

Leeza Gibbons represents Alzheimer's disease on the agency's 29-member Independent Citizens' Oversight Committee (ICOC). "As patient advocates, we represent all voters and all life-limiting conditions and diseases, but my heart leaps when I see innovative science utilizing stem cells to treat or cure Alzheimer's and other memory-robbing conditions," she said. "It is a true honor to be at the ground level of change as a member of the ICOC."

The Early Translation (ET) Awards have begun to develop a track record for advancing basic discoveries to the point where a potential therapy has been identified. Two recipients of the first ET round later beat back stiff competition to get one of CIRM's Disease Team 2 Planning grants. This grant was to help them assemble the teams needed to develop a plan to get the therapy candidate into clinic trials. One showed that a type of stem cell can be effective in delivering therapeutic molecules and will be tested with a treatment for Huntington's disease, and one offers a potential treatment for Alzheimer's disease.

Early Translational III Awards

| Number | Investigator | Institution | Funds Committed |
|-----------|--------------------|---|-----------------|
| TR3-05501 | Helen Blau | Stanford University | 1,825,920 |
| TR3-05641 | Stephen Forman | City of Hope National Medical Center | 5,217,004 |
| TR3-05542 | Holger Willenbring | University of California, San Francisco | 1,544,170 |

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| | | | |
| TR3-05568 | Juan Carlos Izpisua Belmonte | The Salk Institute for Biological Studies | 2,340,000 |
| TR3-05577 | Lawrence Goldstein | University of California, San Diego | 1,857,600 |
| TR3-05669 | David Schubert | The Salk Institute for Biological Studies | 1,673,757 |
| TR3-05628 | Mark Tuszynski | University of California, San Diego | 4,699,569 |
| TR3-05559 | Yang Xu | University of California, San Diego | 1,857,600 |
| TR3-05709 | Kyriacos Athanasiou | University of California, Davis | 1,735,703 |
| TR3-05556 | Joseph Wu | Stanford University | 4,766,231 |
| TR3-05603 | Thomas Lane | University of California, Irvine | 4,799,814 |
| TR3-05687 | Eric David Adler | University of California, San Diego | 1,701,575 |
| TR3-05569 | Renee Reijo Pera | Stanford University | 5,279,607 |
| TR3-05476 | Philip Schwartz | Children's Hospital of Orange County | 5,509,978 |
| TR3-05535 | Morton Cowan | University of California, San Francisco | 3,931,662 |
| TR3-05617 | Peter Schultz | Scripps Research Institute | 4,327,175 |
| TR3-05488 | Toshio Miki | University of Southern California | 1,750,375 |
| TR3-05676 | Eugene Wei-Ming Yeo | University of California, San Diego | 1,654,830 |
| TR3-05593 | Deepak Srivastava | The J. David Gladstone Institutes | 6,319,110 |
| TR3-05606 | Arnold Kriegstein | University of California, San Francisco | 1,623,251 |
| TR3-05626 | Walter Boyd | University of California, Davis | 4,939,140 |
| Total | | | 69,354,071 |

About CIRM: CIRM was established in November 2004 with the passage of Proposition 71, the California Stem Cell Research and Cures Act. The statewide ballot measure, which provided \$3 billion in funding for stem cell research at California universities and research institutions, was overwhelmingly approved by voters, and called for the establishment of an entity to make grants and provide loans for stem cell research, research facilities, and other vital research opportunities. A list of grants and loans awarded to date may be seen here: <http://www.cirm.ca.gov/for-researchers/researchfunding>.

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